

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 04380 021359Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4939
INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4380

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EC
SUBJ: ELECTORAL CALENDAR CRYSTALIZING

1. GALO PLAZA, PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL
STATED PUBLICLY ON JUNE 27 THAT THE RECEDULATION PROCESS--
A MAJOR STEP IN THE PROCESS OF RETURNING TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERN-
MENT WOULD MOST LIKELY TERMINATE ON AUGUST 31 AND BY SEPTEMBER
15 AT THE LATEST.

2. COMMENT: THE LAW GOVERNING THE REFERENDUM STIPULATES THAT
VOTING LISTS MUST BE PREPARED WITHIN 90 DAYS AFTER THE END OF
RECEDULATION AND THE REFERENDUM MUST BE CONVOKED 30 DAYS AFTER
THE LISTS ARE PREPARED. UNDER THIS FORMULA THE REFERENDUM WILL
BE HELD NO LATER THAN JANUARY 15, 1978 AND POSSIBLY A FEW MONTHS
EARLIER, DEPENDING ON HOW LONG IT ACTUALLY TAKES TO PREPARE THE
VOTER LISTS.

3. ON THE TWO DRAFT CONSTITUTIONS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE
REFERENDUM, ONLY ONE STIPULATES PRECISE DATES FOR THE INSTALLA-
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PAGE 02 QUITO 04380 021359Z

TION OF CONSTITUTIONAL INSTITUTION: THE CONSTITUTION DRAFTED
BY THE HOST COMMISSION SETS A JUNE 1, 1978 DATE FOR THE
INAUGURATION OF A PRESIDENT. THIS CONSTITUTIONAL
ALTERNATIVE ALSO APPEARS TO BE THE ONE ATTRACTING THE MOST
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND IS THUS THE MOST LIKELY TO BE CHOSEN BY THE
VOTERS. IF SO, ALLOWING FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF A SECOND
RUN-OFF ELECTION, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE

TO BE SCHEDULED NO LATER THAN APRIL 1978 IN ORDER TO COMPLY
WITH THE UNE 1 INAUGURAL DEADLINE.

4. SOME POLITICIANS ARE CONCERNED THAT SHOULD THE REFERENDUM
NOT BE HELD UNTIL JANUARY 15, THE FORMAL ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN
MIGHT BE TOO SHORT TO OVERCOME THE EARLY LEAD THAT IS PRESUMED
HELD BY POPULIST ASSAD BUCARAM. THIS PROSPECT MAY FORCE THE
ANTI-BUCARAM PARTIES TO HAMMER OUT COALITIONS AND LAUNCH
CANDIDACIES BEFORE THE REFERENDUM, WHICH MANY DOUBT THEY WILL
BE SUFFICIENTLY ORGANIZED TO DO. FAILING THIS, SOME GROUPS,
NOTABLY THE LIBERALS, ARE TOYING WITH THE IDEA OF ASKING
THE SUPREME COUNCIL TO HAND OVER POWR TO A PROVISIONAL CIVILIAN
PRESIDENT ON JUNE 1, 1978 WHILE DECREEEING THE POSTPONMENT OF
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AFTER THAT DATE.
BLOOMFILD

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